



King Street metro functions as a major gateway to the city of Alexandria

## GOAL 11. ENHANCE STREETSCAPES AND GATEWAYS

Streets, and their associated streetscapes and gateways, are crucial open space resources for a community. They function as places of trade, play, communication and gathering. They are the front doors for our neighborhoods. King Street, recently improved with brick sidewalks, trees and furnishings, is Alexandria's main street and a memorable place to gather for important events. Commonwealth Avenue is a desirable address because of its tree-lined median and attractive streetscape. With few opportunities for open space development, we need to look to our streets as places for beautification and linkage.

The Plan encourages the City to develop an interconnected network of pedestrian friendly streets. In addition, the City should create entrance gateways that provide a positive image of arrival.

### Recommendations for Goal 11

- Enact comprehensive streetscape enhancements on the following roadways:



Commonwealth Ave streetscape

#### Protect:

- Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Commonwealth Avenue
- Braddock Road
- King Street
- Quaker Lane
- Jordan Street
- Howard Street
- Beauregard Street
- Seminary Road
- Russell Road

#### Enhance:

- Washington Street
- Route 1
- Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Braddock Road
- King Street
- Beauregard Street
- Duke Street
- Eisenhower Avenue
- Van Dorn Street
- West Glebe Road

- Create entranced gateways at the following locations:

#### • Highway intersections:

##### — I-395 at:

- King Street
- Quaker Lane
- Seminary Road
- Duke Street

##### — I-495 at:

- Telegraph Road
- Mill Road
- Clermont
- Route 1
- Washington Street
- Van Dorn Street

## — At Major Street Entry Points:

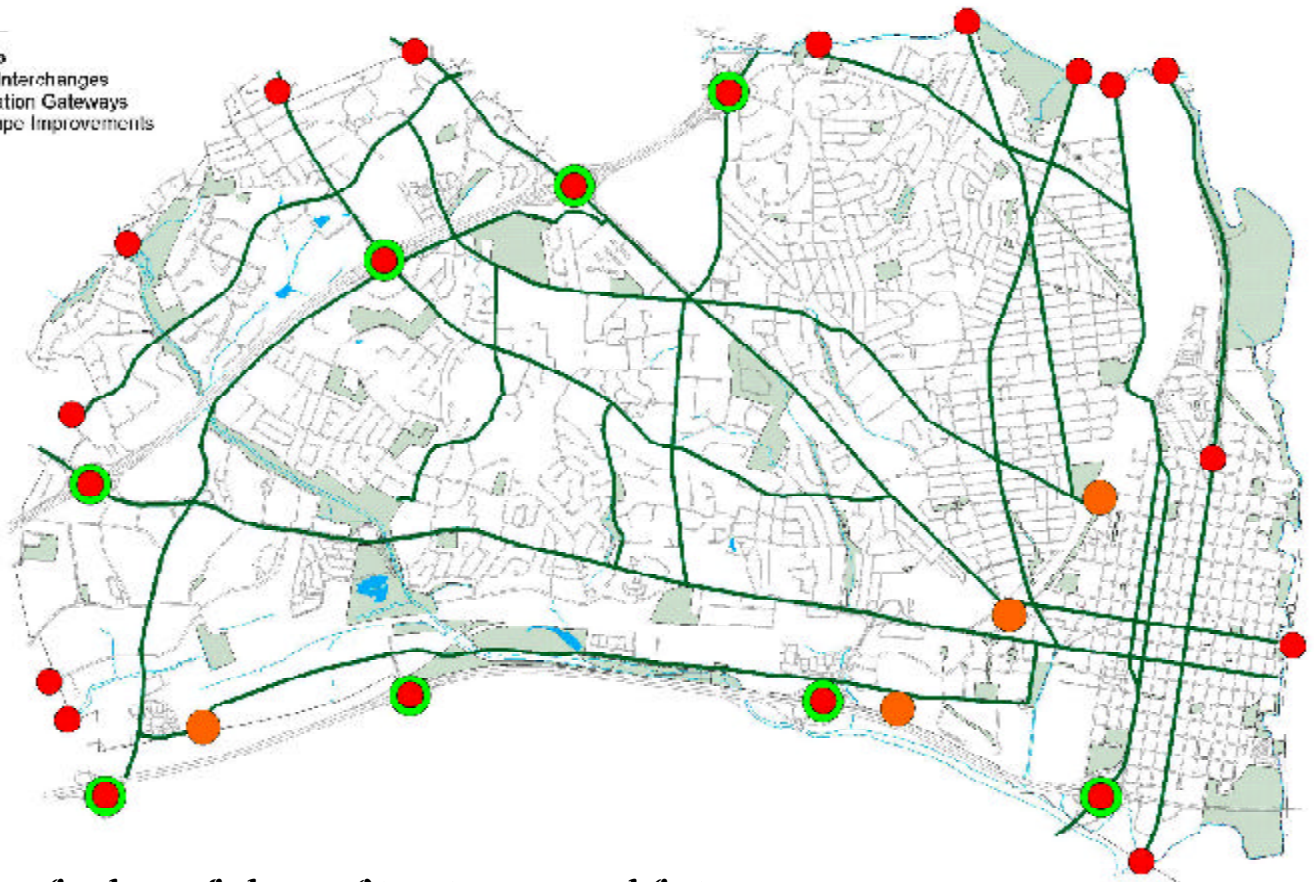
- Van Dorn Street
- Telegraph Road
- Route 1 at Jefferson Street
- Washington Street at Hunting Creek & Memorial Circle
- Edsall Road
- Beauregard Street at Lincolnia Road
- Leesburg Pike at Beauregard Street
- Seminary Road at Colfax Avenue
- West Glebe Road at Four Mile Run
- Mount Vernon Avenue at Four Mile Run
- Route 1 at Four Mile Run
- Washington Street at north end of City

## — At entry points along trails:

- Trail at Green Crescent and Fairfax County
- Holmes Run at Fairfax County
- Seminary Road at Fairfax County
- Four Mile Run at Mt. Vernon Avenue
- Mt. Vernon Trail/Potomac National Heritage Trail
- Potomac River Waterfront Walk
- Metro pedestrian gateways
- King Street at the Potomac River
- Alexandria Heritage Trail hubs- Chinquapin Park, Jones Point, Dangerfield Island

## Legend

- Gateways
- Beautify Interchanges
- Metro Station Gateways
- Streetscape Improvements
- Parks



**Figure 27: Goal 11 - Enhance Streetscapes and Gateways**

- Produce a guide to historical buildings and open space features to strengthen the development of a street/gateway enhancement plan.

### *Implementation Strategies for Goal 11*

- Establish an interagency working group with representation from the Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Transportation and Environmental Services; and Planning and Zoning as well as from the Office of Historic Alexandria and VDOT, and other relevant commissions and groups to create and implement a comprehensive streetscape program for the City. This should encompass:
  - Signage
  - Sidewalks
  - Intersections/crosswalks
  - Lighting
  - Street furniture
  - Landscaping and street trees
  - Historical sites
  - Undergrounding utilities
  - Median treatment
- This interagency group should also consider implementation of a gateway improvement program, to include:
  - Special planting
  - Lighting
  - Signage
  - Paving
  - Historic overviews
  - Irrigation and maintenance
  - Improvements to highway interchanges within the City's limits
- Establish design guidelines for streetscape elements that recognize and reflect the individual character of each neighborhood or area of the City. These might be derived, in part, from the historical features of each area.
- Require adherence to design guidelines for development applications and other approvals affecting streetscape.
- Provide adequate levels of infrastructure to support and maintain these streetscape/gateway programs. In addition to City funding, consider calling upon volunteer programs such as Tree Stewards, Adopt-a-Park, and Adopt-a-Marker programs for heritage trail sites in order to support these efforts.



## **GOAL 12. EXPAND CITYWIDE STREET TREE PROGRAM AND PROTECT EXISTING TREES AND WOODLAND AREAS**

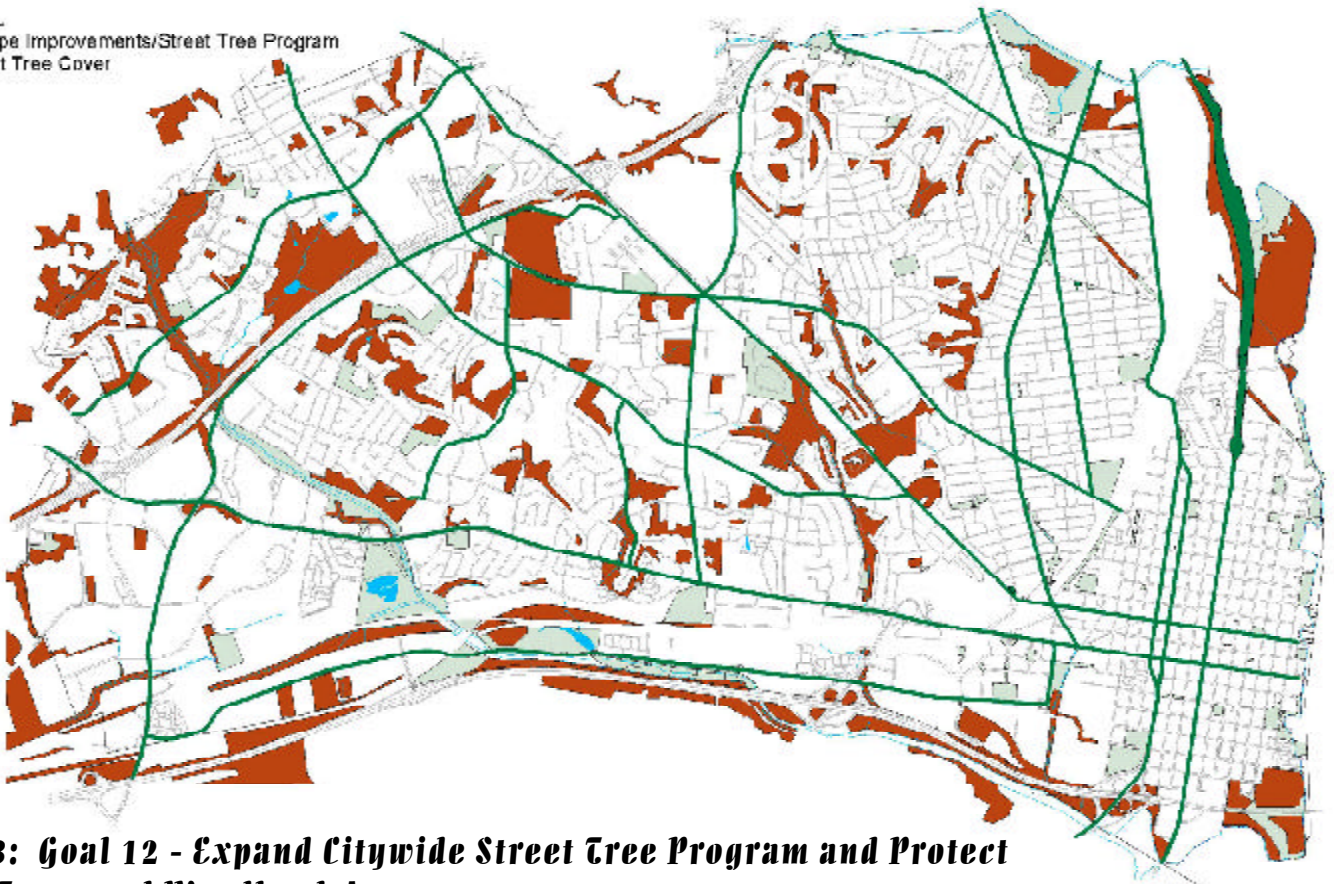
Our City's beauty is created, in part, through its street trees, wooded properties and environmental corridors. The City has an active program to continue planting street trees and protect vegetation in its parks. The City should maximize opportunities to enhance its tree coverage and protect its natural woodland resources.

### *Recommendations for Goal 12*

- Protect significant tree-lined arterials, parkways, thoroughfares, and boulevards, including:
  - Holmes Run Parkway
  - Taylor Run Parkway
  - Timber Branch Parkway
  - North Beauregard Street
  - Commonwealth Avenue
  - Ft. Williams Parkway
- Identify and address potential tree cover protection areas, including:
  - Beverly Hills
  - Episcopal Seminary / High School site

#### Legend

- Streetscape Improvements/Street Tree Program
- Significant Tree Cover
- Parks



**Figure 28: Goal 12 - Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas**



Woodland area

- Inova Hospital
- St. Agnes / St. Steven's School sites
- Rosemont
- Del Ray
- Park Fairfax
- Old Town
- Neighborhoods bordered by:
  - Seminary Road, I-395 and Fairfax County
  - I-395, King Street, Quaker Land and Seminary Road
  - Braddock Road, Russell Road, Quaker Lane and Janney's Lane
  - Quaker Lane, West Glebe Road, Cameron Mills Road and Crestwood Drive
- Address stream valleys protection areas including:
  - Four Mile Run, Holmes Run, Cameron Run, Taylor Run, Old Cameron Run, Timber Branch, Backlick Run, Strawberry Run, Hooffs Run, Great Hunting Creek, and Lucky Run
- [See recommendations for specific streetscape programs below.]

### *Implementation Strategies for Goal 12*

- Establish an aggressive campaign to involve community organizations in protecting existing trees and planting new trees within each neighborhood. Provide incentives for the planting and maintenance of trees on private property.
- Strengthen existing tree protection regulations. Establish a City Tree Plan and identify areas for increased forestation.
- Support and strengthen the newly established Arlington and Alexandria Tree Steward Program to assist in tree maintenance, planting, and public education.
- Request the Department of Planning and Zoning to research the feasibility of establishing a Tree Cover Overlay District. This designation would provide an additional means of protection for trees in areas of the City where these are essential to their quality and character. Distinguish between areas where tree crown cover is provided on private versus public lands.
- Amend City's landscape and streetscape guidelines to improve tree planting areas (e.g., continuous trenches, enlarged planting areas, greater soil volumes, irrigation and drainage) and increase tree coverage requirements for new developments where possible.
- Strengthen the City's ability to maintain its existing tree inventory (e.g., institute a watering program for new trees, etc.).

- Evaluate existing City tree crown cover based on current American Forests recommended standards for residential and commercial areas.
- Create specific agreements with VDOT for maintenance of wooded areas along highways through the City.



King Street metro station

### **GOAL 13. ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF CIVIC PARKS AT AND ADJACENT TO METRO STATIONS**

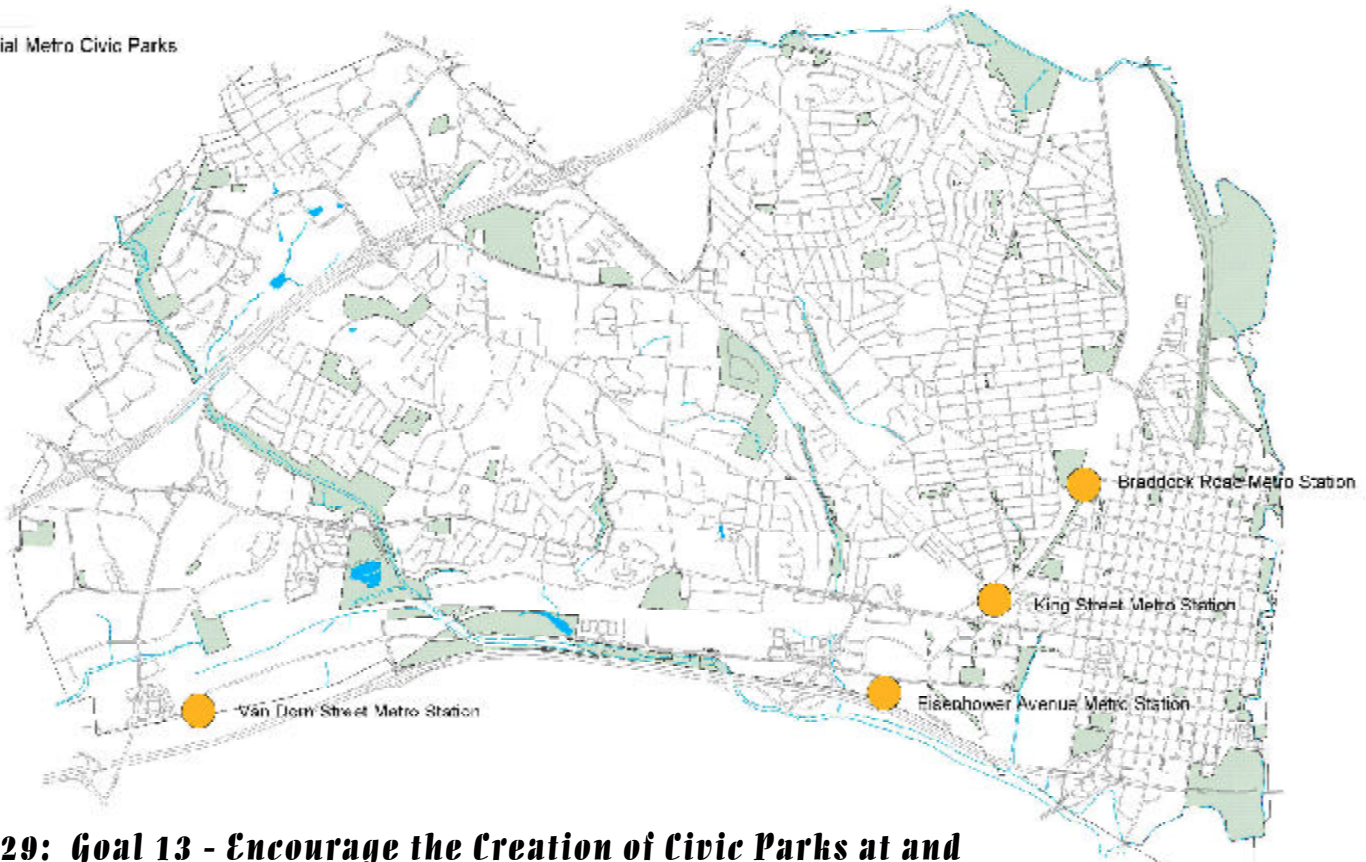
Open spaces adjacent to Metro Stations can serve as important civic spaces; they should function as welcoming spaces to our community. Currently Metro Station areas consist primarily of roads, parking lots and bus shelters. As these areas become sites for redevelopment, civic parks should be key elements in the development program that can accommodate civic gatherings, events and other formal and informal outdoor uses.

#### ***Recommendations for Goal 13***

- Coordinate with WMATA to enhance opportunities at each Metro station area, to create and upgrade civic spaces, and provide safe pedestrian connections.
- Provide open space/greenway linkages between Eisenhower Avenue

#### **Legend**

- Potential Metro Civic Parks
- Parks



**Figure 29: Goal 13 - Encourage the Creation of Civic Parks at and Adjacent to Metro Stations**



### Metro Station and Cameron Run Stream Valley.

- Provide a new, safe open space/greenway linkage between the Parker Gray / Slaters Lane areas and the Braddock Road Metro Station.
- Provide a new, safe open space/greenway linkage between the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station and the Potomac River waterfront.
- Develop signs for Metro Stations to mark access to trails and open spaces.

### *Implementation Strategies for Goal 13*

- Establish a collaborative relationship with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to develop a program for upgrading open space at Metro stations.
- Establish a working relationship between the appropriate City departments and WMATA to maximize opportunities to create additional civic space in new joint development efforts in and around the City's four Metro stations.
- Seek opportunities to link Metro stations to Alexandria's trail network.



Interstate 395

### **GOAL 14. BEAUTIFY INTERCHANGES AND HIGHWAY CORRIDORS**

Like civic spaces at Metro Stations, interchanges and highway corridors function as the front doors to our community for the driver. Interstate—395 has a narrow but significant strip of vegetation along its edges and I-95 runs parallel to Cameron Run. The City should work with VDOT to ensure protection of vegetation along Interstate highway corridors that traverse and bound the City, and to upgrade the landscape qualities of all of these highway interchanges and corridors.

### *Recommendations for Goal 14*

- Enhance and protect conditions at the following locations:
  - Interchanges:
    - I-95 at:
      - Route 1
      - Telegraph Road
      - Eisenhower Avenue
      - Van Dorn Street
    - I-395 at:
      - Duke Street
      - Seminary Road
      - King Street



Interstate 395

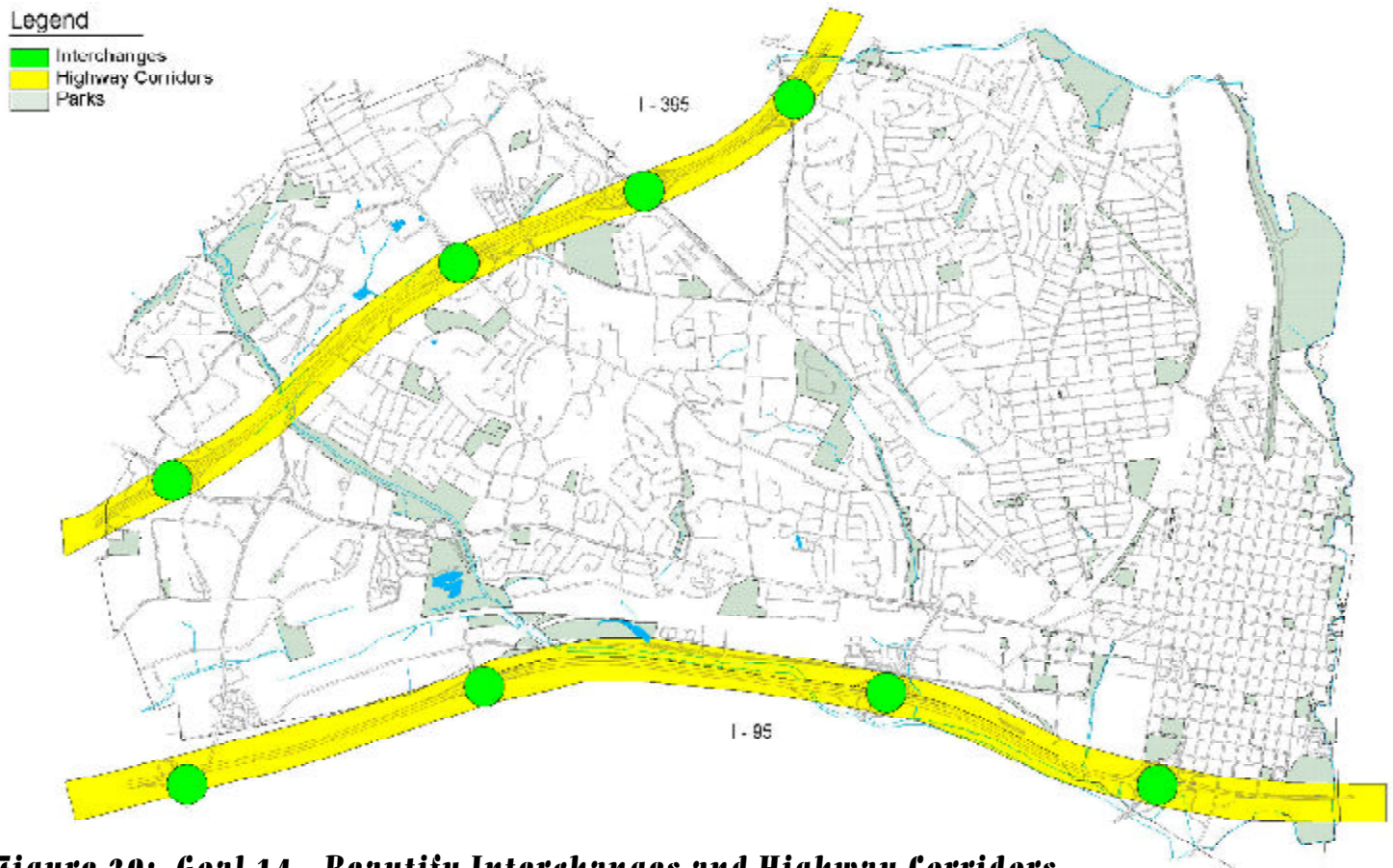
- Quaker Lane
- Highway Corridors:
  - I-95, from Wilson Bridge to Van Dorn Street
  - I-395, from Quaker Lane to Duke Street
- Roadway enhancements should maximize opportunities for forestation and reforestation where appropriate.

#### *Implementation Strategies for Goal 14*

- The Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities should collaborate with VDOT on upgrading maintenance of, and developing design standards for, highway interchanges and corridors throughout Alexandria.
- The City should monitor all highway expansion programs proposed by VDOT to ensure protection of existing landscape plans.

### **GOAL 15. PROTECT PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE**

Most of Alexandria's open space is privately owned and inaccessible to the general public. Nevertheless, this land provides valuable green space for its



**Figure 30: Goal 14 - Beautify Interchanges and Highway Corridors**



surrounding community, creates a significant visual amenity, and contributes to the control of microclimatic conditions in the City. Individual property owners, even those with relatively small amounts of open space, can participate in efforts to retain that open space by making careful land use decisions on the need for home additions, for subdivision of large lots to create additional dwellings, on the creative use of easements to provide protection as well as some tax benefit for retaining open space.

#### *Recommendations for Goal 15*

- Educate private landowners on the importance (economic, aesthetic, environmental) of their open spaces, and on available tools for preserving and protecting that space (e.g., easements, etc.).
- Explore legal and planning strategies to encourage private landowners to preserve and protect their open space areas.
- Request that the Office of Real Estate Assessment undertake a study comparing the values of private properties in Alexandria adjacent to/ not adjacent to open space in order to document the quantitative value of open space for the City.

#### *Implementation Strategies for Goal 15*

- In furtherance of the strong conservation policy of the City of Alexandria, preserve privately owned open space that meets any one of the following criteria that have been identified by representatives of the people of Alexandria as yielding significant public benefit and therefore being worthy of preservation or conservation.
  - Open small areas of privately held open space in already congested and developed areas for passive neighborhood enjoyment, visual relief, scenic value, and screening and buffering purposes.
  - Open space that provides relief from urban closeness, especially small lots in dense urban neighborhoods containing neighborhood gardens, trees or other natural features.
  - Land areas to enhance buffering and screening between uses, such as between a developed area and a park or historic site.
  - Land adjacent to public parkland, institutional sites, natural areas, water bodies, cemeteries, other land preserved by easement, all in furtherance of the specific Goals of this Open Space Plan.

- Open space that contributes to the scenic enjoyment of the general public if development of the property would impair the scenic character of the urban landscape or would interfere with a scenic panorama that can be enjoyed from a park, nature preserve, road, water body, trail, or historic structure or land area, and such area or transportation way is open to, or utilized by, the public.
  - Open space containing or adjacent to any designated historical or cultural resource that provides a buffer or context for such resources.
  - Open space that contains any specimen trees, significant groupings of hardwood or other trees that add to the city's tree canopy, open meadowlands, sloping terrain or other significant natural features;and
  - Open Space not identified above that meets Goals 1-14 of the Alexandria Open Space Plan
- Provide a biannual seminar on easements that are currently available to all residents of the City. Such easements are available through the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, and through other organizations accepting easements. Individuals owning properties highlighted in or close to those identified in the Open Space Plan, as well as representatives from the real estate and development communities would be specifically invited to attend these sessions.
  - Actively support the request for an amendment to Article 4 of Chapter 32, Title 58.1 of the Virginia Code, which would decrease to one-quarter acre the minimum acreage required to receive the tax benefit for creation of an easement.
  - Support an increase to the recordation tax for real property deeds recorded for conveyance of land within the City. If then approved by the General Assembly, this authorization could provide the beginning of an open space purchase fund.
  - Consider zoning mechanisms to address the problem of infill development and the incremental loss of open space as a result of home additions and individual land use decisions.
  - Appropriate significant public financial resources and grant real estate tax relief in order to demonstrate a commitment by the City to the protection or privately owned open space through conservation easements and other preservation tools.